

Today's News - Friday, March 1, 2013

- Can U.S. embassies be safe without being unsightly? Yes, according to a new State Department video "describing art, design and architecture as diplomatic languages."
- Saffron says no matter how many design tricks even talented architects use, "design will not save us from what's wrong with parking garages," as evidenced by a new one in Philly that, in the end, "is as oppressive and lifeless as any other."
- Rochon cheers plans to "soften the edges" of the ROM's "jagged face."
- Chan cheers Selldorf's new gallery: "Amid a neighborhood of High Line-hugging trophy buildings, it dialogues with a less polished Chelsea, highlighting the oft-overlooked pulchritude of warehouses, factories, and auto shops rather than expunging its industrial past."
- Eyefuls of the 60th Annual Progressive Architecture Award winners (great presentation).
- A good reason to head to Harvard next week: "Putting Public Space in its Place" conference (an impressive line-up of participants led by GSD's own public space guru Kayden).
- Weekend diversions:
- The release of a new report on the benefits of green schools times perfectly with the opening of the "Green Schools" exhibition at the National Building Museum.
- While in D.C., check out the "new kid on the design-fest block," the D.C. International Design Festival.
- King takes in SFMOMA's Lebbeus Woods show: it "can be challenged on multiple levels, starting with whether he in fact was an architect at all. But there's no denying the potent force of the drawings that hum with life along the walls."
- Rawsthorn and McDonald are enraptured by Eileen Gray show at the Centre Pompidou: it "goes a long way toward correcting misperceptions by asserting both her architectural credentials and her commitment to modernism" + it's a "stunning" and "breathtaking retrospective" that leaves "no doubt she has been rescued from relative obscurity."
- Wainwright x 2: Vitra Design Museum's "vast new retrospective" of Louis Kahn, "the brick whisperer," brings to life "a vivid picture of a curious man, with his obsessions."
- He's quite taken by "Venice Takeaway" at RIBA: "What do the national anthem and a 'small, elderly woman' have in common with statutory building rules?"
- NYC's Skyscraper Museum offers "The Woolworth Building @ 100," that shows itself "still radiant on the lower Manhattan skyline."
- Design Museum Boston presents an array of entries in the Street Seats Design Challenge competition (some are pretty nifty!).
- Schumacher gives two thumbs-ups to Brook's "A History of Future Cities": he "relays these complicated histories succinctly, densely and vividly."
- Thompson cheers Bosker's exploration of "duplitecture" in "Original Copies."
- Galinsky's "Malls Across America" is "a time capsule of not only American culture, but an unflinching document of the shopping mall in its prime."
- A new play in Sydney features built environments by nine architectural teams of established and up-and-coming architects.

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Can U.S. Embassies Be Safe Without Being Unsightly? ...there was a shift to the more prisonlike embassies that have drawn criticism of late. Now, that's changing, with help from a State Department initiative — Design Excellence — that includes a promotional video describing art, design and architecture as diplomatic languages. [slide show, video]- National Public Radio (NPR)

Lifeless parking garage slows city's pulse: ...a common misconception that the only thing wrong with garages is the way they look...But design will not save us from what's wrong with garages...Erdy McHenry has clearly pulled out every design trick in their arsenal to overcome the natural limitations...yet, in the end...[it] is as oppressive and lifeless as any other in Philadelphia. By Inga Saffron [images]- Philadelphia Inquirer

ROM plans green gateway around signature crystal: The Royal Ontario Museum is planning to soften the edges of its jagged face..."We're rethinking the whole notion of sidewalk, public space and institution to give to Toronto that slow, wonderful experience that you get now in New York or in Europe." By Lisa Rochon -- Hariri Pontarini Architects; Claude Cormier- Globe and Mail (Canada)

Annabelle Selldorf Helps David Zwirner Realize His Grandest Gallery Space Yet: ...conveys through its architecture an overwhelming devotion to art and its place in an ever-changing city...Amid a neighborhood of High Line-hugging trophy buildings...[it] dialogues with a less polished Chelsea, highlighting the oft-overlooked pulchritude of Manhattan's West Side warehouses, factories, and auto shops rather than expunging its industrial past. By Kelly Chan -- Selldorf Architects [slide show]- Artinfo

60th Annual Progressive Architecture Awards: The 10 winners of the P/A Awards demonstrate how programming and pragmatism can trump formalist movements...A shedding of the isms... -- Lateral Office; Asymptote Architecture; Perkins+Will; Steven Mankouche and Matthew Schulte; NADAAA; BIG/Bjarke Ingels Group; CRO Studio; Barkow Leibinger [links to info/images]- Architect Magazine

"Putting Public Space in its Place," Harvard GSD Conference on Public Space, March 7-8 (free): From Tahrir Square to Zuccotti Park, physical public space reminded us of its multiple ambitions and capabilities...place still matters. -- Jerold S. Kayden; Adrien Benepe/The Trust for Public Land; Holly Leicht/New Yorkers for Parks; Susan Chin/Design Trust for Public Space; Adrian Geuze/West 8; Fred Kent/Project for Public Spaces; Jonathan Marvel/Rogers Marvel Architects; Blair Kamin/Chicago Tribune; Kate Orff/SCAPE; Paul Katz/Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF); etc. - Harvard University Graduate School of Design (GSD)

Schools & Universities Report Health & Productivity Benefits from Green School Efforts, According to New McGraw-Hill Construction SmartMarket Report: "New & Retrofit Green Schools: The Cost Benefits and Influence of a Green School on its Occupants"...released with the opening of the new "Green Schools" exhibition at the National Building Museum... [link to report]- CNBC

"Green Schools": New Exhibition Provides Unprecedented Survey of Environmental Designs Opening at the National Building Museum, March 3: ...examples of what is possible - the future that, in some places, is already here.... -- Perkins+Will; VMDO Architects; SHW Group; Fanning/Howey Associates; Bryant Mitchell [slide show]- National Building Museum (Washington, DC)

A Capital Idea: The New D.C. International Design Festival: There's a new kid on the design-fest block...through May 19...At the heart of the multi-disciplinary festival is the exhibition "The Next Wave: Industrial Design Innovation in the 21st Century"....- FORM magazine

Lebbeus Woods: artistry over architecture: ...exhibition at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art can be challenged on multiple levels, starting with whether he in fact was an architect at all. But there's no denying the potent force of the drawings that hum with life along the walls...I'm not convinced that he made a lasting contribution to architectural theory in and of itself. But "Lebbeus Woods, Architect" demonstrates this beyond dispute: He drew with a passion, and he conveyed that passion well. By John King [images]- San Francisco Chronicle

Eileen Gray, Freed From Seclusion: A show at the Centre Pompidou in Paris breathes new life into the designer's

reputation...thanks to Joseph Rykwert's championship, she is now regarded as one of the most influential architects and furniture designers of the last century...remains an elusive figure...retrospective goes a long way toward correcting the misperceptions of Gray by asserting both her architectural credentials and her commitment to modernism. By Alice Rawsthorn- New York Times

Bringing Eileen Gray into the light: ...now that the Centre Pompidou has ranked her alongside Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe among the architects and designers who "defined modernity" in the early 20th century...It is a stunning ensemble...breathtaking retrospective...there is no doubt she has been rescued from relative obscurity. By Frank McDonald [images]- Irish Times

Louis Kahn: the brick whisperer: Inspired by ruins, DNA and primary geometry, he was one of the 20th century's most influential architects. Why isn't he more famous? "Louis Kahn - The Power of Architecture"...A vast new retrospective...at the Vitra Design Museum...a vivid picture of a curious man, with his obsessions... By Oliver Wainwright [images]- Guardian (UK)

Are building regulations the enemy of architecture? What do the national anthem and a 'small, elderly woman' have in common with statutory building rules? "Venice Takeaway: Ideas to Change British Architecture" seeks to untangle the red tape of these complicated restrictions. By Oliver Wainwright -- Liam Ross and Tolulope Onabolu [images]- Guardian (UK)

"The Woolworth Building @ 100": Still radiant on the lower Manhattan skyline, the landmark heralds both the past and future of New York; at The Skyscraper Museum, NYC, through July 14 -- Cass Gilbert (1913) [images]- The Skyscraper Museum

Designers Compete to Reinvent the Park Bench: Innovative 'Street Seats' Debut at Fort Point Channel: Street Seats Design Challenge semi-finalist designs will be on display...Our public urban outdoor furniture could be so much more. This competition will prove it. -- Design Museum Boston [images]- BostInno

"A History of Future Cities" by Daniel Brook: a meticulously researched and compelling read that traces the rise of four West-inspired metropolises in the East that exemplify globalism in our age...The stories of cities can be difficult to tell, and Brook relays these complicated histories succinctly, densely and vividly. By Mary Louise Schumacher- Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Why Imitation Can Be the Sincerest Form of Innovation: It's "duplicitecture"...Bianca Bosker explores the phenomenon in "Original Copies"...duplicitecture is crucial to understanding China's penchant for copying Western products... "Maybe we're the ones who have an unhealthy attitude toward copyright"... By Clive Thompson- Wired

Eternal Spring: The Immortality of the American Shopping Mall: In 1989, a 20-year-old Michael Galinsky traveled across the country photographing malls and the people inside..."Malls Across America"...a time capsule of not only American culture, but an unflinching document of the shopping mall in its prime...Among architects and urban planners, this sensation is sometimes referred to as the Gruen Effect... -- Victor Gruen- BULLETT

Architectural play in Sydney: "I Love Todd Sampson" by Andy Macdonald, founder of Mac-Interactive, will feature a multitude of built environments, each designed and constructed by one of nine architectural teams [of] established and up and coming practices... -- CKW; Rivard-Lewanne Performative Spaces; Ensemble; FLATPAC; Sam Crawford Architects; Genevieve Liley Architects; WLTS; Carter-Williamson; Archrival- Architecture & Design (Australia)

Nuts + Bolts #2: You Can't SELL If You Can't TELL: You talk all the time but are you communicating clearly? Use your words effectively to build your influence. By Tami D. Hausman, Ph.D.- ArchNewsNow

-- Michael Maltzan Architecture: Regen Projects, Los Angeles, California
-- MAD Architects/Ma Yansong: Huangshan Mountain Village, Anhui Province, China

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